

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04
SIL-01 OES-06 NRC-07 ACDA-10 /084 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7976
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
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ERDA WASHDC

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DEPT PLS PASS NRC

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, ELAB, FR
SUBJECT: PARTIAL EASING OF FRENCH NUCLEAR EMPLOYEES
STRIKE

SUMMARY. AFTER ACCEPTING A CEA PROPOSAL TO RETURN TO
WORK AND CONTINUE THE MANAGEMENT-LABOR DISCUSSIONS,
WORKERS AT THE LA HAGUE NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT HAVE
ENDED THE STRIKE WHICH HAS CRIPPLED OPERATIONS THERE
FOR THREE MONTHS (BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 16). WORKERS AT
THE REPROCESSING CENTER WERE PROTESTING THE
"PRIVATIZATION" OF THE CENTER AND ALLEGING GREATER
DANGERS TO HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS DUE TO THIS
"PRIVATIZATION." AT A RECENT CONGRESS HELD BY WORKERS
IN CHERBOURG TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS CREATED BY THE DEVELOP-
MENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, SEVERAL MOTIONS WERE ADOPTED
ASKING THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER THE NUCLEAR
ENERGY INDUSTRY AS A PUBLIC INDUSTRY AND NOT A COMMER-
CIAL ONE, WHICH IN TURN WOULD DEMAND GREATER SAFE-
GUARDS AND SECURITY. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER THREE MONTHS OF CONFLICT AND NEGOTIATIONS
BETWEEN PERSONNEL AT CEA PLANTS AND CEA OFFICIALS,
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WORKERS ACCEPTED THE PROPOSAL FORWARDED DECEMBER 3 BY

CEA ADMINISTRATOR ANDRE GIRAUD TO RETURN TO WORK AND TO CONTINUE THE UNION-CEA DISPUTE DISCUSSIONS. THIS PROPOSAL CAME AFTER THE FIRST UNION-SPONSORED NATIONAL MEETINGS ON NUCLEAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT, HELD IN CHERBOURG ON NOVEMBER 27 AND 28. ATTENDING THE MEETINGS WERE REPRESENTATIVES AND WORKERS FROM CEA PLANTS AT LA HAGUE, MARCOULE AND MIRAMAS. ALTHOUGH INVITED, NO FRENCH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (CEA, MINISTRIES OR EDF) ATTENDED. THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THESE MEETINGS WAS TO PROTEST THE "PRIVATIZATION" (CEA RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THE TRANSFER OF CONTROL OF ITS PLANTS TO COGEMA, COMPAGNIE GENERALE DES MATIERES NUCLEAIRES, A PRIVATE ENTERPRISE CONTROLLED 100 PERCENT BY CEA) OF CEA NUCLEAR CENTERS AND TO DISCUSS THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY AND THE PROBLEMS IT CREATES, I.E. HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS AND SECURITY OF INSTALLATIONS. THE PREVIOUS FOCUS OF THE WORKERS' COMPLAINTS HAD BEEN THE JOB SECURITY ASPECT OF THE "PRIVATIZATION" EFFORT BY CEA: WORKERS CLAIMED A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE HAD GREATER EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS THAN WOULD AN EMPLOYEE OF COGEMA. THE FOCUS OF THE MEETINGS IN LA HAGUE THEREFORE HAD MOVED TO THE ISSUE OF PERSONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, SPECIFICALLY AT THE LA HAGUE REPROCESSING PLANT WHICH IS THE MOST SENSITIVE CEA FACILITY ON THIS ISSUE IN THAT IT HANDLES HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE AND TOXIC SUBSTANCES. THE WORKERS ALLEGED THAT SAFETY STANDARDS UNDER COGEMA OR ANY OTHER "PRIVATE" ENTERPRISE WOULD FALL WELL BELOW, IN THEIR VIEW, THE ALREADY MINIMAL STANDARDS SET BY CEA. NOT ONLY DID THEY OPPOSE VEHEMENTLY

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"PRIVATIZATION" BUT MANY CEA WORKERS WERE DEMANDING NATIONALIZATION OF THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY. WORKERS WERE SUPPORTED IN THEIR DEMANDS AT THE RECENT MEETINGS BY THE LEFTISTPOLITICAL PARTIES, INCLUDING THE PARTI SOCIALIST AND THE PARTI COMMUNIST.

3. FROM THOSE MEETINGS CAME THE FOLLOWING DEMANDS:

- A. THAT THE GOF AND POLITICAL PARTIES SUBMIT A DRAFT BILL AFFIRMING THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY'S UNIQUE STATUS AND THAT SAFETY STANDARDS BE GIVEN PRIMARY CONSIDERATION;
- B. THAT ALL CEA INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES BE CONSIDERED PUBLIC;
- C. THAT NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN TO CONCLUDE A COLLECTIVE NATIONAL AGREEMENT COVERING INDUSTRIES RELATED TO DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY;
- D. THAT PARLIAMENT FULFILL ITS DUTY IN OVERSEEING ALL ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD.

4. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE CEA PROPOSAL TO RETURN TO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR A REASONABLE PERIOD TO PERMIT DISCUSSIONS TO REACH A SOLUTION OR WHETHER THINGS WILL AGAIN FLARE UP IN ANOTHER STRIKE SITUATION.

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